



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 158

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2012

No. 16

## Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RICHARD J. DURBIN, a Senator from the State of Illinois.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Lord, the Earth belongs to You, the world and everything in it. You are an awesome and majestic God. When we have anxieties about what the future holds, remind us that the hearts of Kings, Queens, and Presidents are in Your hands and You guide them wherever You please. You are sovereign.

Today, bless our lawmakers. Give them a positive attitude regarding the challenges they face. Lord, help them believe that You guard this Nation and will empower them with exactly what they need to lead with excellence.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable RICHARD J. DURBIN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, February 1, 2012.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable RICHARD J. DURBIN, a Senator from the State of Illinois, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. DURBIN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### SCHEDULE

ELIZABETH MACDONOUGH

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as the Presiding Officer and all Senators should understand, we have a new sheriff in the Senate now. And we wish Elizabeth MacDonough well. She is certainly well qualified for this job. She has proven that in the decade she has been here, her fairness and astuteness of Senate rules. Let everyone understand that a new boss is in the Senate now.

This morning, following any leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour. The Republicans will control the first half and the majority will control the final half. Following morning business, we will resume consideration of the STOCK Act.

### THE STOCK ACT

Mr. President, it is my understanding that the Republicans are going to have a luncheon today. I hope they discuss what they want to do here on the Senate floor. Last night we had a situation where two of our fine Senators, Mr. LIEBERMAN and Ms. COLLINS, who have a reputation of being fair and bipartisan, did their best to work through some amendments, to set up votes on them, and they couldn't do it because we had Senators who offered amendments that had nothing to do with this bill—nothing. But Republican Senators said they would not allow a vote on germane and relevant amendments until they were guaranteed a vote on their nongermane amendments. So that is not a good situation, and we cannot legislate in that fashion. It is

one thing to offer an amendment that is not germane, but to demand a vote on it out of order before any other amendments? So the minority has to make a decision whether they want to legislate or have people give speeches all day that have nothing to do with the legislation.

I hope the leadership and the Senators generally on the other side of the aisle will work together to help us move this piece of legislation out of here. It is an important piece of legislation. We were told it is bipartisan. Only two Senators voted against breaking the filibusters so we could start debating this bill.

### SPENDING

The Republicans in Congress often claim they are the only thing standing against a wave of deficit spending. But where were these Republicans when President Bush pushed for trillions in unpaid tax cuts for the rich? Where were they? They were right here in Congress, that is where. So instead of pointing the finger at us, Republicans should examine their own track record of extravagant spending: a prescription drug plan, unpaid for; two unpaid wars; tax breaks for the rich, unpaid for. And they were paid for—borrowed money, money borrowed from American taxpayers. Trillions of dollars. In fact, President Bush's tax cuts were the single largest contributor to the ballooning budget deficits during his administration. There were plenty of others, but that was No. 1. And no one benefited from these tax breaks more than billionaires and millionaires. Tax breaks for the richest Americans piled nearly \$1 trillion on our debt over the last decade. The tax bill was far more than that, but that is just people making more than \$1 million a year.

Yesterday the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office released a report showing that these tax cuts will continue to push deficits to unsafe levels. We know that, but in addition to doing that, what it does is it makes the poor

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

S233